



Public Notice

**U.S. Army Corps
Of Engineers
Galveston District**

Permit Application No: 23489
Date Issued: 4 August 2004
Comments Due: 3 September 2004

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: To inform you of a proposal for work in which you might be interested. It is also to solicit your comments and information to better enable us to make a reasonable decision on factors affecting the public interest. We hope you will participate in this process.

AUTHORITY: This application will be reviewed pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

APPLICANT: Apex Oil & Gas, Inc.
350 North Sam Houston Parkway East, Suite 295
Houston, Texas 77060-3398

AGENT: Belaire Environmental, Inc.
P.O. Box 741
Rockport, Texas 78381-0741
Telephone: 361-729-2948
POC: Charles Belaire

LOCATION: The project is located in State Tract 18, Copano Bay, approximately 2 miles west of Lamar, Aransas County, Texas. The project can be located on the U.S.G.S. quadrangle map entitled: Lamar, Texas. Approximate UTM Coordinates in NAD 27 (meters): Zone 14; Easting: 690250; Northing: 3115300.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to install, operate, and maintain structures and equipment necessary for oil and gas drilling, production, and transportation activities for Well No. 1. Such activities include installation of typical marine barges and keyways, shell and gravel pads, production structures with attendant facilities, and flowlines. Four 3-pile mooring clusters will be temporarily installed on each side of the drilling platform (8 total) and removed when drilling operations are completed and the rig removed.

The bay bottom at the project site consists of mud and approximately 3,800 cubic yards of shell, crushed rock, or washed gravel will be used as a base for the proposed drilling rig and production facility. The pad would be 282 feet long by 112 feet wide with 2:1 side slopes and cover approximately 32,000 square feet of area at a typical elevation of 5.8 to 6.8 feet above the bay bottom. Deep-water access is available into and at the proposed site; therefore, no dredging is proposed. Typical water depth at the site is –7 feet mean high water. Some scattered oysters were observed along the proposed access route; however, no wetlands, seagrasses, or oysters are expected to be impacted by the proposed project. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 4 sheets.

NOTES: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified.

A preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Since permit assessment is a continuing process, this preliminary determination of EIS requirement will be changed if data or information brought forth in the coordination process is of a significant nature.

Our evaluation will also follow the guidelines published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

OTHER AGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS: Texas Railroad Commission certification is required.

Texas Coastal Zone consistency certification is required. The applicant has stated that the project is consistent with the Texas Coastal Management Program goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with said Program.

STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: Texas Railroad Commission water quality certification is required.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: The staff archaeologist has reviewed the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places, lists of properties determined eligible, and other sources of information. The following is current knowledge of the presence or absence of historic properties and the effects of the undertaking upon these properties:

The State Tracts proposed for work under this permit application are not included in the Texas Antiquity Committee's list of tracts containing State Archaeological Landmarks. Therefore, the proposed activities are not likely to affect pre-20th-century shipwrecks.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Preliminary indications are that no known threatened and/or endangered species or their critical habitat will be affected by the proposed work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on Essential Fish Habitat or Federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW FACTORS: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR 320-330, the Regulatory Programs of the Corps of Engineers, and other pertinent laws, regulations and executive orders. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps of Engineers may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: Prior to the close of the comment period any person may make a written request for a public hearing setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine whether the issues are substantial and should be considered in the permit decision. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **3 September 2004**. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections**. Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to:

Mark Pattillo
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